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Security Council

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Wednesday, 26 November 2008, 10.45 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Urbina	(Costa Rica)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. De Gucht
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2008/728)

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08-62035 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (S/2008/728)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alan Doss, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Doss to take a seat at the Council table.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Karel De Gucht, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the fourth special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, contained in document S/2008/728.

Members also have before them document S/2008/703, which contains the text of a letter dated 31 October 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alan Doss, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Doss: I am very pleased to be able to join the Council today as it begins its consideration of the Secretary-General's fourth special report on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2008/728). This is a critical time for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The fighting that has erupted in the eastern part of the country, along with its major humanitarian consequences, reminds us that overall peace and stability in the country cannot be attained without resolving the root causes of conflict in its troubled eastern regions.

Over 250,000 people have been directly affected by the resumed hostilities. Overall, a quarter of the people of North Kivu are currently displaced. It was the lack of will and capacity to implement the numerous inter-Congolese and regional agreements reached that led to the resumption of major hostilities at the end of October.

We call on all parties to respect the agreements reached and return to the political process established by the Nairobi and Goma frameworks. We welcome in this regard the intensive international, regional and bilateral political efforts in the past few weeks to resolve the current crisis.

I am pleased to report that, as a result of Special Envoy Obasanjo's first round of talks, a ceasefire has been established and the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) and other armed groups have pulled back in order to create a zone of separation between the fighting forces in the northern part of the southern half of North Kivu. After consultations with the Secretary-General in New York this week,

President Obasanjo will return to the region on Friday to resume his efforts for the parties and neighbouring States. President Obasanjo's mediation mission is also expected to address the continuing problem of the presence of Rwandan armed groups comprised of members of the former armed forces of Rwanda and Interahamwe and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda in the eastern Democratic Republic, as well as to follow up on the Nairobi communiqué.

Recent events have had a profound effect on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the way it implements its mandate. Already overstretched, the Mission has had to assume full responsibility for the protection of the major population centres in North Kivu and to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

A major reconfiguration effort has been under way to reinforce MONUC's presence in North Kivu, including from within the province itself. We are therefore very grateful that the Council has authorized the additional resources that I had requested in early October. These reinforcements will provide us with some time and space for the political and diplomatic initiatives to go forward. At the same time, we should be very aware that these additional troops will not be on the ground before a couple of months at the very earliest — and probably it may take longer — despite the efforts that are currently under way to mobilize and deploy those reinforcements as soon as possible.

That is why we have and continue to support the calls for the deployment of a multinational force as a bridging measure until MONUC is fully reinforced. We should also be mindful that the MONUC's presence should not replace the national authorities and security forces in their responsibility to protect civilians and to protect the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are particularly concerned at and deplore the recent attacks on civilians and unlawful killings of individuals in areas that have been overrun by conflict. We have warned that these actions constitute war crimes and will be pursued.

We look forward to an in-depth discussion with the Council members on the future role of MONUC, how it can adapt its mandate to the new realities, and how it can be more effective, especially in helping the Congolese people, consolidating peace and creating a better future for the country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Doss for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, in taking the floor for the first time here in the Council this month, allow me at the outset to discharge the pleasant duty of congratulating you on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I would also like to join in the unanimous praise for the Chinese presidency of last month. I would like to thank most sincerely Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts on behalf of the restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and above all for having appointed President Obasanjo as Special Envoy for eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence with us of Mr. Karel De Gucht, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium. His Excellency is most welcome in New York. Finally, this meeting allows me also to welcome a friend, Mr. Alan Doss, Special Representative of the Secretary-General. I am grateful for his presentation of the fourth special report (S/2008/728) and recognize the crucial importance of his statement.

I shall begin by referring to Mr. Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Council members will recall that, on 2 October 2001, in his statement to the annual conference of his party, he referred to a moral duty to provide military and humanitarian international assistance to any country in need and emphasized that

> "If the world continues to ignore the sufferings of African nations, like in the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of the Congo, it would breed anger and frustration which would threaten global stability."

I would endorse the remarks of the British Prime Minister. I have always affirmed the need for serious and intensive thinking on the long-standing and immediate underlying causes of the present conflict, which could help the international community to take all measures required to restore normalcy to the Great Lakes region as a whole and to root out chaos and

desolation. There have been 300,000 dead in Burundi, nearly 1 million dead in Rwanda, 5 million dead in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — enough is enough.

How long must this horror last and what is its justification? Today, the entire world is hailing the decision of the Security Council to follow up the request of the Secretary-General for a temporary increase in the authorized military and police personnel for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). That is important to strengthen the Mission's capacity to offer genuine protection to the Congolese civilian population, the victim of an obvious humanitarian disaster, as Mr. Doss emphasized, and of mass violations of human rights, in particular acts of violence directed against women and children. The person directly responsible is a warlord who, through some undoubtedly stately footwork, continues to defy in all impunity the entire international community more than six years now after being designated by the international community as a war criminal. That gentleman is behaving as if he were preparing for the definitive occupation of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, unfortunately with the complicity of some of my compatriots. Others in the region are also responsible. Their responsibility is more important than his direct responsibility, but less than others that are even more global still.

Regarding regional responsibility, our relations with Rwanda have perhaps not yet yielded the results we had hoped for. A great deal remains to be done. However, talks are highly instructive from all points of view and are encouraging enough to allow us to see, despite difficulties, signs of a possible exit from the crisis. For us, that means finding a good balance between Rwandan claims and the legitimate concerns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to return to the remarks made by former Prime Minister Tony Blair. I asked why the international community continues to wish to humiliate all the peoples and ethnic groups that make up the mosaic of the Congolese nation because of a crime in which no one from Zaire or the Congo ever participated. The question has been raised.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo needs peace. We need peace to tackle other gigantic challenges as well. We have established balances, but they no longer exist. We need to restore a State that can perform, that can restore the most fundamental rights of its citizens and do so on healthy and democratic bases — a State that can provide for lasting peace, accompanied by sustainable development, both for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the entire Great Lakes region.

Finally, this must be a State that is marked by the highest goals of humankind — namely, peace, justice and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to members of the Council.

Mr. De Gucht (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): During the Arria Formula meeting devoted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo yesterday, the representatives of non-governmental organizations bore witness to the disastrous humanitarian situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Millions of people have perished in the Congo during the last 10 years. The present wave of violence, unfortunately, has compounded their suffering. Thousands of people have had to abandon their homes.

I welcome the efforts of the United Nations and the Security Council in particular, which are continuing to be fully engaged in a resolution to the crisis in the Congo. Beyond the commendable efforts of the Secretary-General, in particular through his Special Envoy, President Obasanjo, there is certainly a need to underscore action of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which represents the largest peacekeeping operation in the world, and whose capacity has just been strengthened following the adoption of resolution 1843 (2008).

MONUC is playing an important role, and this should be emphasized. On the eve of discussion on the extension of its mandate, which must take place before the end of the year, there is a need for a debate on the way in which we can maximize the functioning of this tool. We must have that debate. Moreover, this is the thrust of one of the conclusions of the report that the Secretary-General has just submitted to us.

I would like to share several ideas with Council members, in particular regarding the underlying causes of the conflict, which we need to bear in mind during such a discussion.

Human destitution in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to be fuelled by a lethal mix of two ingredients — the nearly total lack of any effective State authority, in concert with an abundance of natural resources and their use for belligerent purposes. In my view, there is a need to take these reasons for the conflict fully into account in formulating MONUC's mandate in order to maximize its effectiveness.

It is well known to everyone that the Congolese army is in a lamentable state. Fighting against the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) has shown that the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) is badly prepared, organized and led. The State is not in a position to establish its authority over vast areas, some of which, in the meantime, are being administered by the CNDP. In North Kivu, the Congolese army, for practical purposes, no longer exists. This army, which has partially disintegrated, with some of its units turning against the population because they are not being properly paid and maintained. This can hardly, in the short term, form the sole tool on which the international community, through MONUC, is relying to restore the authority of the State.

Therefore, the question must be asked as to whether the concept of joint operations of MONUC with the FARDC should not be redefined. I would like to reassure the Security Council that I am not advocating a MONUC which would fight independently against all armed groups in the east of the Congo. There is always room for cooperation and to support the Congolese authorities. But only with difficulty can the FARDC form the sole foundation of our strategy against armed groups, be they foreign or Congolese.

MONUC must move further up to the forefront and play a more prominent role in these operations directed against armed groups. This requires from MONUC better supervisory functions, and by, if necessary, assuming command of certain operations, as was the case for some operations in the past.

No one can deny that the natural resources in the east of the Congo are one of the major reasons for the conflict now under way. Any strategy which we wish to be effective must devote high priority attention to that dimension. Tackling the sources of financing of armed groups could turn out to be more effective than any other military strategy. This idea should be further taken into account in planning operations. MONUC should also make maximum use of its capacity in the area of inspection, to put an end not only to illegal trafficking in weapons but also to the exploitation and illegal trade in raw materials, such as coltan or cassiterite. Such an action on MONUC's part can be carried out within a broader framework in which the international community supports the authorities of the Congo in re-establishing their control over the exploitation of natural resources. Here, we are thinking of tracing or certification mechanisms, as referred to by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the Nairobi summit on 7 November 2008.

Tackling the underlying causes of the conflict is pivotal, but this will not make it possible to alleviate the suffering of the population in Kivu in the short term. That population has great expectations of MONUC in this area. The capacity of MONUC is limited. It cannot be ubiquitous and act everywhere simultaneously; but where it is present, where it can be deployed in time and where civilian lives are endangered, it must act. This is of the highest priority. It must be absolutely clear that MONUC in that case can act in an independent fashion and that it will do so in accordance with its mandate.

The rules of engagement must clearly reflect MONUC's mandate, and where there are still ambiguities, the mandate should be clarified. This also assumes, in our view, that in those places where uncontrolled elements of the FARDC are the source of abuses directed against the population, MONUC should be able to act and to do so in accordance with the mandate for the protection of the civilian population that it has.

Belgium views its political and diplomatic action as a part of that action undertaken by the European Union, which is playing an active role within the framework of international facilitation. The choice of a possible European action here, designed to support MONUC's efforts, has been referred to over the last few weeks. For its part, Belgium is in favour of such action and would be ready to contribute to it. At the present time, however, we urgently need to consider how we can provide MONUC with the capabilities given it through resolution 1843 (2008).

For its part, Belgium will be examining the needs drawn up by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. I am confident that Belgium soon will be able to announce a contribution in terms of aerial transportation, information gathering and processing and eventually in training.

Allow me to conclude my statement by expressing our appreciation for the outstanding work being carried out by the men and women who are working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in difficult conditions to ensure that peace can finally return to that great country in the heart of Africa.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish, in accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing, to welcome the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the representative of Rwanda, and, of course, to thank the Foreign Minister of Belgium for his statement and for spending time with us today on this important topic.

I will have more detailed points that I would like to make in consultations, but as this is a meeting with the wider membership present, there are just a couple of points I would like to take the opportunity to highlight now.

The first of those points is that we would like to underline our very strong support for the Special Envoy, President Obasanjo. We very much welcome his appointment and are committed to helping him in any way he thinks can be useful. We believe his activities have already had a significant positive impact in refocusing attention on the need for a political solution to the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is already helping to bring the parties together, and I understand he has another trip to the region planned for later this week. We wish him every success, and we call on the international community to give him whatever support he needs over the coming weeks. As I mentioned, that is certainly what we intend to do.

The second point I would like to make is to stress the importance of the earliest possible deployment of the 3,100 additional personnel for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) which the Council mandated in its resolution 1843 (2008). We understand that a target of two months has been put on this deployment. We think that is a bit too leisurely. We note that in certain other cases — and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon is the one that springs most readily to mind — it was possible to get troops there within a matter of weeks. We think that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of those that would benefit from the earliest possible deployment of additional personnel.

We stand ready to support the Secretariat's efforts to identify suitable troop-contributing countries. We stand ready to help troop-contributing countries deploy their own forces, and we stand ready to contribute equipment and, as necessary, personnel to help with specialized functions, notably on the command and intelligence side.

Those were the two points I wanted to make in the Chamber.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Alan Doss for his summary of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/728). I would also like to congratulate him, as well as the entire personnel of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) on their commitment and the decisive role they are playing in keeping the peace in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite all the unfortunate obstacles. I would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium. We appreciated his important statement on the topic under consideration.

I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for his information on the situation; we look forward also to hearing the statement of our colleague from Rwanda.

The numerous atrocities in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have, we must acknowledge and state, reached a climax. No human conscience can tolerate this. The escalation of armed violence since the resumption of hostilities last August has led to a catastrophic humanitarian and security

situation, as we can see from the total destitution in which displaced persons live, the indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations, the sexual violence and the ethnic-based massacre of civilians.

Clearly, the situation is fraught with danger; we even have to fear carnage and a possible expansion of the conflict to the rest of the subregion. In these conditions, any initiative that could help to resolve the crisis can only be beneficial.

We strongly support the political action undertaken at the international and subregional levels in order to reach such a settlement, and we note with great interest the mediation undertaken by Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, Special Envoy of the Southern African Development Community for the Great Lakes Region. Thanks to their combined efforts, a ceasefire has now been obtained. In order to progress further, they need the firm support and full cooperation of the parties and of the international community.

As we are convinced that only a political solution can sustainably resolve the crisis, we believe it is also crucial for States in the region, in particular the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, to intensify their efforts in order to give effect to the commitments they have undertaken in the framework of the Nairobi process. We urge all players to resolve the substantive issues that separate them, in particular the issue of the threat posed by national and foreign armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is also essential to make it possible for the recommendations which emerged from the bilateral, regional and international initiatives undertaken in early November to restore trust with a view to a resumption of political dialogue. We cannot say this often enough: the Nairobi and Goma processes offer a credible basis for the restoration of peace in the region.

Despite its efforts to implement its mandate, MONUC is almost powerless with respect to the humanitarian tragedy on the ground. Given the collapse and near disintegration of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the criticism levelled against it, MONUC is the only bastion for the population which is fleeing the violence.

Because it understood the risk of the deterioration of the situation, my delegation supported resolution 1843 (2008), which was intended to strengthen MONUC's capacity to fulfil its mission of protecting the civilian population. We recall that during past consultations, the Secretariat assured Council members that MONUC's mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter was robust enough for it to carry out its mission.

However, objective constraints, such as the inaction of the Congolese armed forces, do not allow MONUC to confront the illegal armed forces on its own. As a result, and within the framework of the renewal of this mandate, the question of reviewing MONUC's mandate has to be considered carefully — and, I would say, with a great deal of caution as well, given the continued worsening of the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Once again, the human tragedy being played out on the ground calls out to the international community to find, without delay, viable solutions that would take into account the responsibility to protect civilian populations as well as the duty to pursue and punish all those responsible for atrocities committed in the framework of this conflict. The Security Council must continue to call upon all parties to respect international humanitarian law and, naturally, to consider measures against those who are responsible for serious human rights violations and other atrocities, in particular, war crimes, genocide and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its resolute support for MONUC and hopes that a strengthened Mission can face the many security and humanitarian challenges in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We thus support the efforts under way aimed at finding a final political settlement to the crisis.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Alan Doss, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing.

Deterioration of the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has led to a grave humanitarian situation. The civilian population has faced killings, rapes and child recruitment into armed groups, all of which are crimes

that we condemn, and we call for the perpetrators to be investigated and brought to justice. That should be done impartially, whether the perpetrators are rebels, security forces, national Congolese army or civilians. In that regard, we commend the cooperation between the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and non-governmental organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We also note the increase in internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to 1,350,000, owing to the various conflicts between the Congolese army and the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As is well known, the Security Council and the international community have condemned the new outbreaks of conflict, killings and atrocities committed against civilians, as well as the obstruction of humanitarian assistance trying to reach the IDPs in their camps.

What is happening in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as we all know, is an ethnic conflict that has become very complex and difficult, owing to its long duration, with no solution or settlement in sight and competing regional and international interests in an area that is very rich in natural resources.

Against that background, the dispute between the two brotherly States, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the fact that each is accusing the other of committing crimes have led, unfortunately, to an escalation of the humanitarian and security crisis in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region as a whole. However, we commend the mutual and reciprocal visits of ministers of those two countries, although we regret that direct talks between President Kabila and President Kagame did not take place during the recent Nairobi summit, thereby losing an important opportunity that would have inevitably contributed to settling the issue in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We welcome the joint communiqué issued by the Nairobi summit on 7 November 2008, concerning the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the call for an immediate ceasefire and the establishment of a mechanism to achieve a political settlement of the crisis and its root causes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We commend the various leaders of the region and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, President Obasanjo, who discharged his duty and visited Goma on 15 November and met with Mr. Nkunda, who agreed to commit to the recommendations of the Nairobi communiqué and the Goma statements of commitment.

We also welcome the ceasefire of 18 November and the CNDP's withdrawal from some of the positions it had occupied. We hope that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be able to make more progress in his efforts towards a lasting peace. In that regard, we would like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Obasanjo as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. We support his efforts that, we hope, will lead to a meeting of the points of view of the two brotherly countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as one of the main pillars towards solving the problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A positive development is MONUC's support of the Congolese national army, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, in places such as Ituru and South Kivu, and we would like to register our satisfaction and support for the Government forces extending their control and administration over the natural resources, protection of the civilian population and provision of management, health and judicial services within the humanitarian assistance plan for 2008, as well as preparation for the 2009 plan for those services.

We also appreciate the efforts in implementing the national priorities that have been declared by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have noted that MONUC has tried to implement some of its objectives, particularly with regard to the Goma statements of commitment and the Nairobi communiqué, by supporting the capacities of the security forces and the Congolese national army, as well as by carrying out infrastructure projects and the organization of the return of IDPs and refugees to their homes. Regretfully, those efforts, part of the strategic framework of the United Nations for providing stability and security, have been halted, because of the recent hostilities.

The current situation has made the mandate of MONUC very difficult, particularly in the light of the ongoing fighting and the lack of capacity of the Government forces compared to the relative advantage

of the rebel forces. We hope that the plan to redeploy and reconfigure MONUC is successful and that with its additional force, recently agreed by the Council, MONUC will be able to discharge its mission. However, we must all realize that protection of civilians is, in fact, the responsibility of the national army forces and the national Government.

In conclusion, we call upon the leaders in the region, particularly the Presidents of the two brotherly countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, to put operational pressure on the parties to solve the conflict, the cause of which is well known to all. That would inevitably need the support of neighbouring countries and international partners, as well as those who have a stake in the Great Lakes region. There will certainly not be a military solution, because it is an ethnic and economic issue that goes beyond the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We would like to voice our support for the proposal of the Secretary-General to renew the mandate of MONUC until 31 December 2009 and to ensure that it should have all necessary means to defend and protect civilians in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, because that is where the rebel groups, not the State, have control. The clear political intentions of all those who signed the Goma Agreement and the Nairobi communiqué are the basis for the success of the mission of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the peace endeavours undertaken by African and non-African personalities and bodies.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his presentation of the report on the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). And I would like to reaffirm our support for him and for all the members of his Mission and of the peacekeeping force present on the ground in difficult conditions. We are convinced that without him and without the presence of MONUC, the situation could have deteriorated further and would be even worse than it is today.

I would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium and to recognize his ongoing commitment and that of his country to this difficult situation. We know that Belgium is the driving force on this issue within the European Union.

I would also like to welcome our colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

It seems to us that the mandate of MONUC must be clarified and priorities set. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, after a 10-year presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is vital to carry out a detailed review of MONUC's missions, which have become diversified over the years. MONUC is the United Nations biggest peacekeeping force, but the Democratic Republic of Congo is an enormous country and the challenges to be faced are gigantic. We know that the solution will not be a military but a political one. It hinges on the resumption of the Goma and Nairobi processes and on the reaffirmation by all parties of their will to disarm, disengage and cooperate. To that end, we fully support the efforts of President Obasanjo, whom we had the opportunity to meet yesterday, to strengthen cooperation, in particular among all States of the region. And we believe that they too must respond to the expectations of the international community and further involve themselves in the peace process now under way.

There is a need to reaffirm the high priority nature of the civilian protection in MONUC's mandate by indicating that MONUC's other missions cannot be carried out if they would have a detrimental impact on civilian protection. The testimony of non-governmental organizations yesterday was overwhelming. Crimes have been committed. Atrocities have been perpetrated. We all know this and we are also all aware that these crimes have been committed by all parties. Sexual violence, child recruitment, plundering and murder have risen by dramatic proportions. Everything must be done to put an end to this and that must be the highest priority of MONUC, which must, in our view, tighten its ranks near the camps, and in some cases even within the camps, to carry out such deterrence or security operations, in close cooperation, of course, with the international humanitarian organizations involved.

Questions must also be asked regarding the establishment of the personal responsibility of those who have committed and who are continuing to commit such crimes against the civilian population. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has said that there is a need to follow the situation very closely; of course, we encourage him to do so.

The second priority for MONUC should be that of demobilization and disarmament of armed groups, as well as control of the resources that those groups are deriving from the illegal exploitation of the Congo's natural resources. As was underscored yesterday by the Special Representative, the link between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC must be clarified in terms of actions against armed groups. It seems to us that MONUC should be able, on its own, to carry out defensive operations against those armed groups that might take initiatives that run counter to the Goma and Nairobi processes. That being the case, MONUC has neither the means nor the mission to take the place of the Congolese army.

As was emphasized by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, the illegal exploitation of natural resources is one of the underlying causes of the conflict and above all of the fact that it has lasted so long. Until now, the action of the international community has not been decisive. From now on, we must tackle this problem clear-mindedly, if necessary by adopting any appropriate sanctions and, in any case, by demanding that MONUC, in so far as possible, make use of its deployment to prevent or discourage the flow of illicit traffic that benefits armed groups.

Finally, security sector reform is an important priority. The weakness of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, as stated by its own Minister of Defence, hampers MONUC's proper accomplishment of its mandate. MONUC must work with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the international community to draw up a plan of genuine reconstruction for the Congolese army. The genuine establishment of the rule of law in the Democratic Republic of Congo requires the formation of an army, a justice system and a police force that are effective and democratic. As for MONUC's other missions, those we have already discussed must be maintained in the East of the country but we should also take into consideration the progress that has been achieved in the West of the Democratic Republic of Congo: the gradual transfer of certain tasks, the promotion of good governance and the establishment of a judicial system. The transfer to the Country Team of the United Nations and to bilateral partners could enable MONUC to further focus its action in the East. Other more specific recommendations of the Secretary-General on the modality of such a transfer could also be useful.

My delegation will prepare a draft resolution that will reproduce the major guidelines that I have just indicated and will, of course, take into account the observations made today by the members of the Security Council, by Mr. Alan Doss and by the States involved. We are aware that all members of the Security Council share the same concern, namely, to facilitate the task of MONUC with greater effectiveness. We will do everything in our power so that the negotiations may move forward swiftly and constructively.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): I too would like to thank Special Representative Doss for his comments and Belgian Foreign Minister De Gucht for his contribution today. I would also like to welcome the distinguished representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

The United States is deeply concerned about the recent fighting in Eastern Congo, which has caused considerable human suffering and which has seriously threatened to further destabilize the region.

I would like to make only a couple of comments in the Chamber today and to reserve the rest of my comments and questions for consultations. I think it is important to make two points.

First, we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 1843 (2008) with its authorization for additional forces to deploy to the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). We appreciate the work that MONUC is doing under the most difficult of circumstances to restore stability to the East and to protect the estimated quarter of a million civilians who have been displaced since intensive fighting began in late August. We urge Member States and the United Nations to take concrete measures to ensure the rapid deployment of these additional forces to MONUC.

I would like to note that through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance programme (ACOTA), the United States is supporting all African units deployed in MONUC with equipment and training, and the United States is prepared to support other African elements deploying to enhance the current force structure. It is imperative that all Member States support the efforts of MONUC and

Special Representative Doss to restore stability in the East.

Secondly, we would like to reiterate what the Secretary-General has observed: there is no military solution to the conflict in the East. In this context, we welcome the recent talks between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. We also strongly welcome the appointment of President Obasanjo as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. We support him fully and we urge that all parties cooperate fully with him within the framework of previous existing agreements.

Mr. Liu Yifan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would also like to make a brief statement. I should like to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, for his briefing on the situation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and the work of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). I also welcome the presence of the Foreign Minister of Belgium and the Permanent Representatives of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

China has closely followed the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and is pleased to note signs of improvement there in recent days, including the facts that most parties to the conflict have been observing the ceasefire and that Nkunda's armed forces have begun to withdraw from certain areas. We welcome those developments.

We highly appreciate the good offices and achievements of the Secretary-General, Mr. Obasanjo and the countries and regional organizations concerned. We sincerely call on all factions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the parties in the region to seize the opportunity afforded by the easing of tensions in the eastern part of the country to cooperate in good faith with the mediation efforts of the international community and to take regional stability and the national interests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to heart with a view to restoring general stability in the eastern part of the country.

We note that, in his report (S/2008/728), the Secretary-General expresses concern about the security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The conflicts there have complex root causes involving multiple factors, including political differences, the unequal distribution of economic resources and tribal clashes. The potential recurrence of the conflict and its spillover remains. Attaining peace will continue to require the tireless efforts of all parties.

The Nairobi and Goma peace processes were launched in the second half of 2007 and have since made some progress. We appeal to the parties concerned to base their actions on those processes and to initiate dialogue and negotiations to settle their differences, build mutual trust and move the Great Lakes region towards lasting peace and stability. We support the mediation efforts of the United Nations, African countries and regional organizations.

The United Nations peacekeeping resources are sorely stretched at present, yet a few days ago the Security Council nonetheless adopted resolution 1843 (2008), in which it decided to increase the number of troops deployed to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). That decision clearly demonstrates the high priority and attention accorded by the international community to peace and stability. We hope that the resolution will be implemented as soon as possible and the reinforcements deployed on schedule.

MONUC, the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation to date, has made important contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We agree in principle with the Secretary-General's recommendation to renew the Mission's mandate, and expect the Security Council to begin consulting on the draft resolution submitted by France.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): My delegation welcomes the comprehensive briefing made by Mr. Doss, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We also welcome the participation of the Foreign Minister of Belgium and the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in this debate.

We continue to be concerned that, despite all attempts to restore peace and security, efforts to stabilize the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have experienced significant setbacks recently. Of particular concern was the resumption of fighting on 26 August between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple, which has exacerbated the overall humanitarian situation by displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians,

hampering humanitarian assistance and threatening United Nations staff.

The gravity of the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — including arbitrary executions, rape, torture and degrading treatment — calls for an urgent response. It is in that context that my delegation supported the reconfiguration of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the enhancement of its capabilities. We would therefore support the overall review of MONUC's mandate and the strengthening of its rules of engagement.

However, we must point out that, in the long run, even additional peacekeepers will not resolve the political causes of the conflict. It is imperative that the international community synergize and consolidate its diplomatic and political efforts to address the underlying causes of a conflict of this nature. The only way out of this crisis is a coherent political strategy implemented through consistent and concerted help from the Security Council and influential Member States of the region.

It is in that context that my delegation welcomed the appointment of the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, his focus on building confidence between and among all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours and on addressing the challenges to peace and security posed by the continued presence and activities of illegal armed groups in the eastern part of that country will contribute to resolving some of the root causes of the conflict there.

We wish to highlight some of the important and urgent tasks in the immediate period ahead. All efforts must be deployed to sustain and deepen the implementation of the current ceasefire agreement. The protection of the civilian population is of paramount importance, as are immediate access to humanitarian assistance, the effective implementation of MONUC's mandate and, in particular, laying the groundwork for meaningful dialogue and peace negotiations among all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation stands ready to assist in any way possible towards the successful implementation of those tasks.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Let me first join previous speakers in thanking Special Representative Doss for his briefing. We should also like to welcome the presence of the Foreign Minister of Belgium and the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in today's meeting.

We, too, are of the view that there is no military solution to the conflict. The Council and all the members of the international community therefore need to continue to urge all parties to re-engage in the political process in the frameworks of the Nairobi and Goma processes. The long-term success of the peace process in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will depend not only on the sustained political engagement of all stakeholders, but also on the continued support of the country's international partners.

With regard to the issue of illegal armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, we wish to underscore that their existence and activities remain a core problem that needs urgent attention. All parties need urgently to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1794 (2007), lay down their arms and engage voluntarily and without further delay or preconditions in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), for its part, should continue its support in that regard.

The involvement of neighbouring States could further complicate the situation and escalate the existing tension in the region. At the same time, we recognize that the refugee issue and its spillover to neighbouring States would naturally create additional pressure for external intervention. The immediate neighbours of the Kivu provinces have enough of their own problems to contend with, let alone having to be prepared to address a massive humanitarian crisis. Moreover, fighting and instability could also spread across the border, raising further tensions in the region. All necessary steps should therefore be taken to address the cross-border issue consistently with the existing framework.

We continue to support the good offices of the Secretary-General, in particular his Special Envoy, to work with leaders in the region to find a solution to the problems underlying the conflict. We believe that the

Special Envoy will continue to provide his able leadership to reverse the current escalation and coordinate the full implementation of the Nairobi communiqué and the Goma agreement.

With regard to the issue of MONUC's mandate, we support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that it be extended for the next 12 months. We also share the Secretary-General's views that MONUC's mandate should be carefully reviewed over the next mandate period. In that context, we wish to underline the importance of retaining the issue of the protection of civilians as the focus of MONUC's next mandate. We would also like to emphasize that under the existing Council resolution, MONUC has a mandate to use all necessary means to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. We are hopeful that the temporary increase of MONUC's military strength, pursuant to resolution 1843 (2008), will enable MONUC to reinforce its capacity to protect civilians.

Finally, while most of our attention is focused on the problem in the Kivu provinces, we should also remain vigilant with regard to the security situation in other parts of the country. It is important for the Council to ensure that the deployment of MONUC resources mostly in the eastern part of the country will not create a security vacuum in other parts of the country that could then become vulnerable to a possible outbreak of violence.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): I wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Alan Doss for his briefing. My delegation is also very grateful for the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for his statement. We welcome the presence of His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Belgium, as well as of the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, at our meeting today.

Viet Nam is deeply concerned at the alarming deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is a serious setback in the Nairobi and Goma processes, and the conflict has assumed regional dimensions. We are particularly concerned about the grave atrocities and human rights violations targeting civilians, especially women and children, in the conflict areas. We commend the Belgian delegation for their initiative in holding the Arria meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo yesterday, during which deep concerns were expressed at the gravity of the humanitarian situation, especially sexual and gender-based violence and child recruitment.

The Goma and Nairobi processes are the sole framework for lasting peace and stability in the subregion. It is our view that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda should undertake joint confidence-building measures to defuse the current crisis and facilitate the search for a comprehensive political solution to the conflict.

We hold that all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic must renounce violence and military options, seriously revive the Goma process and respond actively to the United Nations security, stabilization and support strategy for the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We commend the good offices efforts by the Secretary-General and leaders of the European Union and the African Union in facilitating the search for a lasting and comprehensive solution. We welcome the outcome of the Nairobi summit, the joint statement of 7 November and the appointment by the Secretary-General of his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. We hope that it will help revive the Goma and Nairobi processes.

Viet Nam wishes to reiterate its support for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and for its discharge of its mandated duties. We also take note of MONUC's efforts in helping to control the recent fighting, in protecting civilians and in improving the capacity of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).

However, we believe there is still room for improvement in MONUC's performance. MONUC should better implement its principal responsibility of civilian protection, especially after its reinforcement in accordance with resolution 1843 (2008). We believe that within its current resource constraints, MONUC should make the most of its deployment and reconfiguration and should better cooperate and coordinate with FARDC to ensure the successful implementation of its mandate, especially in the area of protection of civilians in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): At the outset, I wish to welcome the presence among us of His Excellency

Foreign Minister De Gucht and Special Representative Doss, as well as the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

We are all well aware that the solution of the conflict in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will have to be a political one and will need the support of all regional stakeholders. Yesterday's Arria Formula meeting showed very clearly that beyond the calls for a stronger and more effective role for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) on the ground, grass-roots and international civil society organizations are increasingly focusing their attention and expectations on the new role of the United Nations on the political track, and they rely on the leadership of the new Special Envoy, former President Obasanjo.

It is crucial for the Security Council to place all its weight behind the action of the Special Envoy. In that sense, a political message to be delivered through our resolution on MONUC's renewal will be as important as, if not more important than, our decisions on the Mission's mandate. That message should be constructed in a timely manner, together with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

As highlighted by yesterday's interaction with civil society, we will have to respond to the expectations of the people whose lives are affected by the conflict. The people of the Kivus are well aware of MONUC's objective constraint. However, as we heard yesterday, they wonder why, in spite of MONUC's clear and robust humanitarian mandate and in spite of its forces, its action has at times given the impression of missing its goal in terms of resolve and cohesion.

The primary purpose of the Security Council will be to reverse that perception. The Council should do so by further clarifying the principle that the Mission's top priority lies in the protection of civilians. It will be important to indicate clearly in the text of our new resolution what that task entails in terms of provisions of humanitarian corridors as well as of active protection of human rights.

MONUC should be an instrument in the fight against impunity, without exception, with a specific task of reporting on the most serious violations committed during the latest waves of fighting. As recalled by the Secretary-General in his report, those who have committed international crimes should be aware that international justice will be applied, including through the International Criminal Court.

However, in order to sustain its humanitarian objectives, MONUC should also contribute to tackling the underlying factors of instability. It should be tasked with a stronger role in supporting the creation of a credible national army while preserving its neutral role as a United Nations peacekeeping force.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in the meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Karel De Gucht, and of the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss, for his substantive briefing on the activities of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and on the situation in that country.

The Russian Federation supports the policy of diplomatic efforts on the part of the international community to stabilize the situation in the east of the country. It is extremely important to prevent further escalation of tensions and their spread to the subregion. We are convinced that military means for resolving the Congo problem do not exist. The sole path, with no alternative, is that of dialogue and the return of the parties to full implementation of the peace agreements achieved in Nairobi and Goma. We call on the armed units of the Congrès national to abide by the ceasefire, cease hostilities, retreat to pre-28 August positions and return to the implementation of the Goma agreement.

The collective efforts of the countries of the Great Lakes region to resolve this crisis situation are of particular importance. It is important to re-establish a climate of trust and confidence between the Congo and Rwanda, including by using the facilitator mechanism established by Mr. Obasanjo and Mr. Mkapa. The efforts of the Special Envoys are already yielding considerable positive results.

Within the country, the Government, in our view, should step up multilateral efforts to resolve the crisis, including through intensified activity to resolve the problem of the presence of troops of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The best way to resolve the crisis would be through the

implementation of the disengagement plan proposed by MONUC and through a regional summit.

The conflict is multifaceted, and it is clear that discrete measures will not yield the desired outcome. In order to restore real stability, there is need for a wide-ranging, comprehensive approach, including a broad set of legal, political and international tools. These include, above all, bilateral and multilateral negotiations; mediation; peacekeeping, with MONUC making full use of its mandate, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; bringing to justice those guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; increased military and economic assistance to the country; and tightened control over compliance with the sanctions regime imposed by the Security Council. All of those elements are required.

A key objective is for the Government to intensify its efforts to build a national army that can ensure security in provinces far from the centre, as well its efforts on security sector reform.

Broadly speaking, we agree with the conclusions set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/728) and the recommendations regarding immediate measures that would promote the restoration of peace in the eastern part of the country.

As to the mandate of MONUC, we believe that the Mission already has an adequate set of competencies. Under resolution 1843 (2008), the military component of the Mission is being substantially strengthened. In our view, the proposal to further strengthen the mandate requires extremely careful, thorough and painstaking consideration that takes account of the views of the troop-contributing countries. The Security Council must be extremely balanced and cautious in considering the matter of giving United Nations peacekeepers the ability to make independent use of coercive force against troops of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its readiness to participate in constructive work on a draft resolution extending the Mission mandate for a further year.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Costa Rica.

I wish to begin by thanking Mr. Alan Doss, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and by taking advantage of his presence here to pay tribute to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for its efforts over the past months. My thanks go also to Mr. Karel De Gucht, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, for his presence at today's meeting.

Yesterday's Arria Formula meeting gave Council members an opportunity to ponder the tragedy taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The international community, and in particular the Security Council, has the responsibility to protect those who are suffering the consequences of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council has the responsibility to protect women and girls who are victims of the cruellest forms of violence resulting from the climate of impunity that prevails in the Kivus. We also have the responsibility to protect boys and girls who are being forcibly recruited by militias. Finally, we have the responsibility to protect the more than 1.35 million people who have now been displaced.

The Council, thus, has clear responsibilities, and we must now discuss the steps that must be taken to meet those responsibilities. The Council has taken the initial step of authorizing the deployment of additional personnel, in response to a request by Mr. Doss — which Costa Rica has supported from the outset. My delegation believes that, in addition to this military reinforcement, the Council must carefully analyse the Mission's mandate and how it is being implemented on the ground, especially in the light of the collapse of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Kivus.

We welcome the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 60 of his report (S/2008/728) that MONUC will act to protect civilians. That has been reaffirmed by Special Representative Doss on several occasions. MONUC's priority must continue to be the protection of civilians, and my delegation will support efforts to strengthen its mandate in that regard.

We believe too that the illegal exploitation of and trade in minerals is among the main factors sustaining the illegal militias in the area. The Council needs to consider how MONUC can help combat that problem. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must shoulder its responsibilities in that respect

and take the measures necessary to prevent elements of its armed forces from colluding with illegal militias in the illegal exploitation of and trade in minerals. Here, the bordering countries also have a responsibility, and they must prevent their territories from being used for illegal trade in resources from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation was pleased to see in the report the Secretary-General's comments about MONUC's support for the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the north-east, in Orientale province, where the objective is to contain the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army. My country has repeatedly expressed its concern for the civilian population in that area and its view that it is important for MONUC to be deployed there in order to protect them.

We take note of the statements made by Lord's Resistance Army leaders about their intention to sign the final Juba peace agreement by the end of this month. We hope that, this time, that will prove to be true, and we urge Mr. Kony to sign the agreement as soon as possible.

I wish in conclusion to state our concern about reports of political repression and human rights violations by the State security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We urge the Congolese authorities to take appropriate measures in that regard, in particular to combat impunity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting on the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for inviting it to participate. My delegation welcomes the presence of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium. We welcome Mr. Alan Doss, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and thank him for his briefing. Our thanks go also to the Secretary-General for his efforts to find an appropriate solution to the problems we are facing, in particular through his appointment of His Excellency President Obasanjo as his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of heads of State or Government of countries of the Great Lakes region and of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including in particular the outcome of the meeting held on 7 November in Nairobi and the 9 November meeting of SADC. We also thank the secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region for its efforts.

Any solution to the security problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be based on firm political will and on accurate information regarding the true situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular in the eastern part of the country.

If it is to benefit from accurate information, the Security Council should ensure that it receives as complete information as possible. It should avoid holding meetings that are too restricted and giving the floor to persons whose anti-Rwandan positions are well known, as occurred, for example, yesterday afternoon, in the absence of the delegation of Rwanda.

The dangers of such practices are that the Security Council will be misinformed, leading to the risk of a biased solution, the underpinning of its efforts to find a solution in the field, the perpetuation of the horrible problems afflicting the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the ongoing expenditure of funds that could otherwise serve other purposes.

My country would like to exercise its right of reply to the mendacious assertions made about Rwanda in yesterday's Security Council meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that the Security Council will give us the opportunity to do so in a meeting of the same format — and, if possible, to confront the politically motivated specialists who had been invited — in order to ensure that the Security Council has accurate information.

My delegation reaffirms Rwanda's resolve to contribute to settling the security problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such a solution can come about only by stemming the underlying cause of that situation, namely, the presence of members of the former Rwandan armed forces and Interhamwe and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, who kill, rape, recruit child soldiers and intelligence agents, live off the backs of the population and exploit the mineral resources of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. Here, I would note resolution 1804 (2008), which has remained a dead letter to date. The solution to these problems can come about only through the implementation of the agreements already signed, of which there are many.

My delegation is gratified by the actions under way between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo undertaken by countries of the Great Lakes region, the Secretary-General, the Security Council, in particular through the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, President Obasanjo. My delegation also welcomes the efforts of the entire international community to find a solution to this terrible situation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.